



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 5449**

February Session, 2018



**AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF CERTAIN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND THE PROVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES BY THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 10-500 of the 2018 supplement to  
2 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
3 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

4 (b) The office shall be responsible for:

5 (1) [The delivery of] Delivering services to young children and their  
6 families to ensure optimal health, safety and learning for each young  
7 child;

8 (2) Developing and implementing the early childhood information  
9 system, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-501;

10 (3) Developing and reporting on the early childhood accountability  
11 plan, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-503;

12 (4) Implementing a communications strategy for outreach to  
13 families, service providers and policymakers;

14       (5) Not later than September 1, 2014, beginning a state-wide  
15 longitudinal evaluation of the school readiness program examining the  
16 educational progress of children from prekindergarten programs to  
17 grade four, inclusive;

18       (6) Developing, coordinating and supporting public and private  
19 partnerships to aid early childhood initiatives;

20       (7) Developing a state-wide developmentally appropriate  
21 kindergarten entrance inventory that measures a child's level of  
22 preparedness for kindergarten, but shall not be used as a measurement  
23 tool for program accountability;

24       (8) Creating a unified set of reporting requirements for the purpose  
25 of collecting the data elements necessary to perform quality  
26 assessments and longitudinal analysis;

27       (9) Comparing and analyzing data collected pursuant to reporting  
28 requirements created under subdivision (8) of this subsection with the  
29 data collected in the state-wide public school information system,  
30 pursuant to section 10-10a, for population-level analysis of children  
31 and families;

32       (10) Continually monitoring and evaluating all early care and  
33 education and child development programs and services, focusing on  
34 program outcomes in satisfying the health, safety, developmental and  
35 educational needs of all children, while retaining distinct separation  
36 between quality improvement services and licensing services for child  
37 care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes;

38       (11) Coordinating home visitation services across programs for  
39 young children;

40       (12) Providing information and technical assistance to persons  
41 seeking early care and education and child development programs and  
42 services;

43       (13) Assisting state agencies and municipalities in obtaining  
44 available federal funding for early care and education and child  
45 development programs and services;

46       (14) Providing technical assistance to providers of early care and  
47 education programs and services to obtain licensing and improve  
48 program quality;

49       (15) Establishing a quality rating and improvement system  
50 developed by the office that covers home-based, center-based and  
51 school-based early child care and learning;

52       (16) Maintaining an accreditation facilitation initiative to assist early  
53 childhood care and education program and service providers in  
54 achieving national standards and program improvement;

55       (17) Consulting with the Early Childhood Cabinet, established  
56 pursuant to section 10-16z, and the Head Start advisory committee,  
57 established pursuant to section 10-16n;

58       (18) Ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive state-wide system  
59 of professional development for providers and staff of early care and  
60 education and child development programs and services;

61       (19) Providing families with opportunities for choice in services  
62 including quality child care and community-based family-centered  
63 services;

64       (20) Integrating early childhood care and education and special  
65 education services;

66       (21) Promoting universal access to early childhood care and  
67 education;

68       (22) Ensuring nonduplication of monitoring and evaluation;

69       (23) Performing any other activities that will assist in the provision  
70 of early care and education and child development programs and

71 services;

72 (24) Developing early learning and development standards to be  
73 used by early care and education providers; [and]

74 (25) Developing and implementing a performance-based evaluation  
75 system to evaluate licensed child care centers, in accordance with the  
76 provisions of section 17b-749f; [.] and

77 (26) Promoting the delivery of services to infants and toddlers to  
78 ensure optimal health, safety and learning of children from birth to  
79 three years of age.

80 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2018*) (a) For the fiscal year ending  
81 June 30, 2019, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Office of Early  
82 Childhood may expend in any year an amount not to exceed one  
83 million dollars of the total amount appropriated to the office for early  
84 care and education and child development programs for the purpose  
85 of carrying out its responsibilities pursuant to section 10-500 of the  
86 general statutes, as amended by this act, including, but not limited to,  
87 program evaluation and improvement, interagency coordination and  
88 collaboration and evaluative tools and infrastructure, except the office  
89 may not expend more than two per cent of the amount appropriated to  
90 the office for a single early care and education and child development  
91 program under this subsection. As used in this subsection, "early care  
92 and education and childhood development programs" includes the  
93 child care subsidy program, established pursuant to section 17b-749 of  
94 the general statutes, as amended by this act, the school readiness  
95 program, as defined in section 10-16p of the general statutes, as  
96 amended by this act, the supplemental quality enhancement grant  
97 program, established pursuant to section 17b-749c of the general  
98 statutes, as amended by this act, the Nurturing Families Network,  
99 established pursuant to section 17b-751b of the general statutes, as  
100 amended by this act, and the program for state financial assistance for  
101 neighborhood facilities, including child care centers, pursuant to  
102 section 8-210 of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

103 (b) Not later than January first of each year, the office shall submit a  
104 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general  
105 statutes, relating to how the office has expended the funds described in  
106 subsection (a) of this section, including the results of any program  
107 evaluations conducted, to the joint standing committee of the General  
108 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education.

109 Sec. 3. Section 17b-749 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
110 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

111 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish and  
112 operate a child care subsidy program to increase the availability,  
113 affordability and quality of child care services for families with a  
114 parent or caretaker who (1) is working or attending high school, or (2)  
115 receives cash assistance under the temporary family assistance  
116 program from the Department of Social Services and is participating in  
117 an education, training or other job preparation activity approved  
118 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17b-688i or subsection (b) of  
119 section 17b-689d. Services available under the child care subsidy  
120 program shall include the provision of child care subsidies for children  
121 under the age of thirteen or children under the age of nineteen with  
122 special needs. The Office of Early Childhood shall open and maintain  
123 enrollment for the child care subsidy program and shall administer  
124 such program within the existing budgetary resources available. The  
125 office shall issue a notice on the office's Internet web site any time the  
126 office closes the program to new applications, changes eligibility  
127 requirements, changes program benefits or makes any other change to  
128 the program's status or terms, except the office shall not be required to  
129 issue such notice when the office expands program eligibility. Any  
130 change in the office's acceptance of new applications, eligibility  
131 requirements, program benefits or any other change to the program's  
132 status or terms for which the office is required to give notice pursuant  
133 to this subsection, shall not be effective until thirty days after the office  
134 issues such notice.

135 (b) The commissioner shall establish income standards for

136 applicants and recipients at a level to include a family with gross  
137 income up to fifty per cent of the state-wide median income, except the  
138 commissioner (1) may increase the income level to up to seventy-five  
139 per cent of the state-wide median income, (2) upon the request of the  
140 Commissioner of Children and Families, may waive the income  
141 standards for adoptive families so that children adopted on or after  
142 October 1, 1999, from the Department of Children and Families are  
143 eligible for the child care subsidy program, and (3) on and after March  
144 1, 2003, shall reduce the income eligibility level to up to fifty-five per  
145 cent of the state-wide median income for applicants and recipients  
146 who qualify based on their loss of eligibility for temporary family  
147 assistance. The commissioner may adopt regulations in accordance  
148 with chapter 54 to establish income criteria and durational  
149 requirements for such waiver of income standards.

150 (c) The commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of  
151 Social Services, shall establish eligibility and program standards  
152 including, but not limited to: (1) A priority intake and eligibility  
153 system with preference given to serving (A) recipients of temporary  
154 family assistance who are employed or engaged in employment  
155 activities under the Department of Social Services' "Jobs First"  
156 program, (B) working families whose temporary family assistance was  
157 discontinued not more than five years prior to the date of application  
158 for the child care subsidy program, (C) teen parents, (D) low-income  
159 working families, (E) adoptive families of children who were adopted  
160 from the Department of Children and Families and who are granted a  
161 waiver of income standards under subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of  
162 this section, (F) working families who are at risk of welfare  
163 dependency, and (G) any household with a child or children  
164 participating in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership federal  
165 grant program for a period of up to twelve months based on Early  
166 Head Start eligibility criteria; (2) health and safety standards for child  
167 care providers not required to be licensed; (3) a reimbursement system  
168 for child care services which account for differences in the age of the  
169 child, number of children in the family, the geographic region and type

170 of care provided by licensed and unlicensed caregivers, the cost and  
171 type of services provided by licensed and unlicensed caregivers,  
172 successful completion of fifteen hours of annual in-service training or  
173 credentialing of child care directors and administrators, and program  
174 accreditation; (4) supplemental payment for special needs of the child  
175 and extended nontraditional hours; (5) an annual rate review process  
176 for providers which assures that reimbursement rates are maintained  
177 at levels which permit equal access to a variety of child care settings;  
178 (6) a sliding reimbursement scale for participating families; (7) an  
179 administrative appeals process; (8) an administrative hearing process  
180 to adjudicate cases of alleged fraud and abuse and to impose sanctions  
181 and recover overpayments; (9) an extended period of program and  
182 payment eligibility when a parent who is receiving a child care  
183 subsidy experiences a temporary interruption in employment or other  
184 approved activity; and (10) a waiting list for the child care subsidy  
185 program that (A) prioritizes within and across existing priority groups,  
186 including, but not limited to, children described in 45 CFR 98.46, as  
187 amended from time to time, and households with an infant or toddler,  
188 and (B) reflects the priority and eligibility system set forth in  
189 subdivision (1) of this subsection, which is reviewed periodically, with  
190 the inclusion of this information in the annual report required to be  
191 issued annually by the office to the Governor and the General  
192 Assembly in accordance with section 17b-733. Such action will include,  
193 but not be limited to, family income, age of child, region of state and  
194 length of time on such waiting list.

195 (d) Not later than July 1, 2015, an applicant determined to be eligible  
196 for program benefits by the Commissioner of Early Childhood shall  
197 remain eligible for such benefits for a period prescribed by federal law.

198 (e) Within available appropriations, a recipient of program benefits  
199 who takes unpaid leave from such recipient's employment due to the  
200 birth or impending birth of a child shall be granted not more than six  
201 weeks of payment eligibility during the leave if: (1) The recipient  
202 intends to return to work at the end of the unpaid leave; (2) the

203 recipient verifies that eligibility is needed to prevent the loss of a slot  
204 in a school-based program or licensed child care setting; and (3) the  
205 child receiving child care services under the program continues to  
206 attend the program during the recipient's leave.

207 (f) A provider under the child care subsidy program that qualifies  
208 for eligibility and subsequently receives payment for child care  
209 services for recipients under this section shall be reimbursed for such  
210 services until informed by the office of the recipient's ineligibility.

211 (g) All licensed child care providers and those providers exempt  
212 from licensing shall provide the office with the following information  
213 in order to maintain eligibility for reimbursement: (1) The name,  
214 address, appropriate identification, Social Security number and  
215 telephone number of the provider and all adults who work for or  
216 reside at the location where care is provided; (2) the name and address  
217 of the child's doctor, primary care provider and health insurance  
218 company; (3) whether the child is immunized and has had health  
219 screens pursuant to the federal Early and Periodic Screening,  
220 Diagnostic and Treatment Services Program under 42 USC 1396d; and  
221 (4) the number of children cared for by the provider.

222 (h) On or after July 1, 2014, the commissioner shall adopt  
223 regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to  
224 implement the provisions of this section.

225 (i) The commissioner shall submit to the joint standing committees  
226 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
227 human services and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies a  
228 copy of the Child Care and Development Fund Plan that the  
229 commissioner submits to the Administration for Children and Families  
230 pursuant to federal law. The copy of the plan shall be submitted to the  
231 committees not later than thirty days after submission of the plan to  
232 the Administration for Children and Families.

233 (j) The commissioner may expend an amount not to exceed two per



234 cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section in a  
235 manner consistent with the provisions of section 2 of this act.

236 Sec. 4. Subsection (k) of section 10-16p of the 2018 supplement to the  
237 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
238 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

239 (k) (1) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this  
240 section may be allocated to the competitive grant program pursuant to  
241 subsection (d) of this section. The determination of the amount of such  
242 allocation shall be made on or before August first.

243 (2) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this  
244 section may be used by the commissioner in a manner consistent with  
245 the provisions of section 2 of this act.

246 Sec. 5. Section 17b-749c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
247 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

248 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish a program,  
249 within available appropriations, to provide, on a competitive basis,  
250 supplemental quality enhancement grants to child care centers or  
251 school readiness programs pursuant to section 10-16p, as amended by  
252 this act, and section 10-16u. Child care centers and school readiness  
253 programs may apply for a supplemental quality enhancement grant at  
254 such time and on such form as the commissioner prescribes. Effective  
255 July 1, 2014, the commissioner shall make funds payable to child care  
256 centers and school readiness programs under such grants on a  
257 prospective basis.

258 (b) Priority for such grants shall be given to programs that are: (1)  
259 Included in a local school readiness plan; (2) full-day, year-round  
260 programs; and (3) accredited, as defined in subdivision (4) of  
261 subsection (a) of section 10-16p.

262 (c) The grants shall be used to:

263 (1) Help providers who are not accredited by the National  
264 Association for the Education of Young Children to obtain such  
265 accreditation;

266 (2) Help directors and administrators to obtain training;

267 (3) Provide comprehensive services, such as enhanced access to  
268 health care, a health consultant, a mental health consultant, nutrition,  
269 family support services, parent education, literacy and parental  
270 involvement, and community and home outreach programs; and  
271 provide information concerning access when needed to a speech and  
272 language therapist;

273 (4) Purchase educational equipment;

274 (5) Provide scholarships for training to obtain a credential in early  
275 childhood education or child development;

276 (6) Provide training for persons who are mentor teachers, as defined  
277 in federal regulations for the Head Start program, and provide a  
278 family service coordinator or a family service worker as such positions  
279 are defined in such federal regulations;

280 (7) Repair fire, health and safety problems in existing facilities and  
281 conduct minor remodeling to comply with the Americans with  
282 Disabilities Act; train child care providers on injury and illness  
283 prevention; and achieve compliance with national safety standards;

284 (8) Create a supportive network with family child care homes and  
285 other providers of care for children;

286 (9) Provide for educational consultation and staff development;

287 (10) Provide for program quality assurance personnel;

288 (11) Provide technical assistance services to enable providers to  
289 develop child care facilities pursuant to sections 17b-749g, 17b-749h  
290 and 17b-749i;

291 (12) Establish a single point of entry system;

292 (13) Provide services that enhance the quality of programs to  
293 maximize the health, safety and learning of children from birth to three  
294 years of age, inclusive, including, but not limited to, those children  
295 served by informal child care arrangements. Such grants may be used  
296 for the improvement of staff to child ratios and interaction, initiatives  
297 to promote staff retention, preliteracy development, parent  
298 involvement, curriculum content and lesson plans.

299 (d) The commissioner may expend an amount not to exceed two per  
300 cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section in a  
301 manner consistent with the provisions of section 2 of this act.

302 Sec. 6. Section 17b-751b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
303 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

304 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish the  
305 structure for a state-wide system for a Nurturing Families Network,  
306 which demonstrates the benefits of preventive services by significantly  
307 reducing the abuse and neglect of infants and by enhancing parent-  
308 child relationships through hospital-based assessment with home  
309 outreach follow-up on infants and their families within families  
310 identified as high risk.

311 (b) The commissioner shall: (1) Develop the comprehensive risk  
312 assessment to be used by the Nurturing Families Network's providers;  
313 (2) develop the training program, standards, and protocols for the pilot  
314 programs; and (3) develop, issue and evaluate requests for proposals  
315 to procure the services required by this section. In evaluating the  
316 proposals, the commissioner shall take into consideration the most  
317 effective and consistent service delivery system allowing for the  
318 continuation of current public and private programs.

319 (c) The commissioner shall establish a data system to enable the  
320 programs to document the following information in a standard  
321 manner: (1) The level of screening and assessment; (2) profiles of risk

322 and family demographics; (3) the incidence of child abuse and neglect;  
323 (4) rates of child development; and (5) any other information the  
324 commissioner deems appropriate.

325 (d) The commissioner shall report to the General Assembly, in  
326 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the establishment,  
327 implementation and progress of the Nurturing Families Network, on  
328 July first of each year.

329 (e) The commissioner may expend an amount not to exceed two per  
330 cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section in a  
331 manner consistent with the provisions of section 2 of this act.

332 Sec. 7. Subsection (f) of section 8-210 of the 2018 supplement to the  
333 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
334 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

335 (f) The Commissioner of Early Childhood may [, in his or her  
336 discretion,] (1) with the approval of the Secretary of the Office of Policy  
337 and Management, authorize the expenditure of such funds for the  
338 purposes of this section as shall enable the Commissioner of Early  
339 Childhood to apply for, qualify for and provide the state's share of  
340 federally assisted child care services, and (2) expend an amount not to  
341 exceed two per cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this  
342 section in a manner consistent with the provisions of section 2 of this  
343 act.

344 Sec. 8. Subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q of the  
345 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
346 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

347 (b) (1) [For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and each fiscal year  
348 thereafter, the per child cost of the Office of Early Childhood school  
349 readiness program offered by a school readiness provider shall not  
350 exceed eight thousand nine hundred twenty-seven dollars] Not later  
351 than June 30, 2019, and at least once every three years thereafter, the  
352 Commissioner of Early Childhood shall conduct a review of rates

353 being used for child day care contracts for the school readiness  
354 program. The commissioner may establish, within available  
355 appropriations, new rates based on the results of such review,  
356 provided such new rates are established to improve program quality  
357 and access.

358 Sec. 9. Subdivision (2) of subsection (e) of section 10-16p of the 2018  
359 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is  
360 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2018*):

361 (2) (A) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of  
362 this section are not expended, the commissioner may deposit such  
363 unexpended funds in the account established under section 10-16aa  
364 and use such unexpended funds in accordance with the provisions of  
365 section 10-16aa.

366 (B) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and each fiscal year  
367 thereafter, if funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of  
368 this section are not expended, an amount up to one million dollars of  
369 such unexpended funds may be available for the provision of  
370 professional development for early childhood care and education  
371 program providers, and staff employed in such programs, provided  
372 such programs accept state funds for infant, toddler and preschool  
373 slots. Such unexpended funds may be available for use in accordance  
374 with the provisions of this subparagraph for the subsequent fiscal year.  
375 The commissioner may use such unexpended funds on and after July  
376 1, 2015, to support early childhood education programs accepting state  
377 funds in satisfying the staff qualifications requirements of  
378 subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this  
379 section. The commissioner shall use any such funds to provide  
380 assistance to individual staff members, giving priority to those staff  
381 members (i) attending an institution of higher education accredited by  
382 the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher  
383 Education, and approved by the Office of Early Childhood, and  
384 regionally accredited, at a maximum of ten thousand dollars per staff  
385 member per year for the cost of higher education courses leading to a

386 bachelor's degree or, not later than December 31, 2015, an associate  
387 degree, as such degrees are described in said subparagraphs (B) and  
388 (C), or (ii) receiving noncredit competency-based training approved by  
389 the office, at a maximum of one thousand dollars per staff member per  
390 year, provided such staff members have applied for all available  
391 federal and state scholarships and grants, and such assistance does not  
392 exceed such staff members' financial need. Individual staff members  
393 shall apply for such unexpended funds in a manner determined by the  
394 commissioner. The commissioner shall determine how such  
395 unexpended funds shall be distributed.

396 (C) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of this  
397 section are not expended pursuant to subsection (c) of this section,  
398 deposited pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, or used  
399 pursuant to subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, the commissioner  
400 may use such unexpended funds to support local school readiness  
401 programs. The commissioner may use such funds for purposes  
402 including, but not limited to, (i) assisting local school readiness  
403 programs in meeting and maintaining accreditation requirements, (ii)  
404 providing training in implementing the preschool assessment and  
405 curriculum frameworks, including training to enhance literacy  
406 teaching skills, (iii) developing a state-wide preschool curriculum, (iv)  
407 developing student assessments for students in grades kindergarten to  
408 two, inclusive, (v) developing and implementing best practices for  
409 parents in supporting preschool and kindergarten student learning,  
410 (vi) developing and implementing strategies for children to  
411 successfully transition to preschool and from preschool to  
412 kindergarten, including through parental engagement and whole-  
413 family supports that may be utilized through the two-generational  
414 initiative, established pursuant to section 17b-112l, or through other  
415 available resources, (vii) providing for professional development,  
416 including assisting in career ladder advancement, for school readiness  
417 staff, (viii) providing supplemental grants to other towns that are  
418 eligible for grants pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, and (ix)  
419 developing a plan to provide spaces in an accredited school readiness

420 program or a school readiness program seeking accreditation to all  
421 eligible children who reside in an area or town described in  
422 subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of subdivision (1) of subsection (d)  
423 of this section.

|   |                     |              |
|---|---------------------|--------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: |                     |              |
| Section 1   | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 10-500(b)    |
| Sec. 2  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | New section  |
| Sec. 3  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 17b-749      |
| Sec. 4  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 10-16p(k)    |
| Sec. 5  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 17b-749c     |
| Sec. 6  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 17b-751b     |
| Sec. 7  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 8-210(f)     |
| Sec. 8  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 10-16q(b)(1) |
| Sec. 9  | <i>July 1, 2018</i> | 10-16p(e)(2) |

**ED**            *Joint Favorable Subst.*

**APP**          *Joint Favorable*